

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 PM-03 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4843

SECDEF/ISA/DSAA

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CSAF WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

S E C R E T THE HAGUE 5948

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJ: F-104 REPLACEMENT: NETHERLANDS TELEVISION
PROGRAM

1. EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED OF A PROPOSED 25-MINUTE TELEVISION PROGRAM TO BE AIRED ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, ON THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF THE F-104 REPLACEMENT ISSUE AND THE FOUR CONTENDER AIRCRAFT. IT IS BEING PREPARED BY NOS, A GENERALLY NON-ORIENTED DUTCH BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION.

2. MAJOR FEATURES OF THE PROGRAM WILL BE TAPED INTERVIEW WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CLEMENTS SCHEDULED, WE UNDERSTAND, TO BE TAKEN LATER THIS WEEK BY NOS PERSONNEL, AND TAPED INTERVIEW WITH LT. GEN. STOKLA, RNLAFF DIRECTOR OF MATERIEL, WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN TAKEN.

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3. AS REGARDS F-104 REPLACEMENT PROJECT, US EMBASSY HAS ADVOCATED AND MAINTAINED A LOW-PRFILE PUBLICITY POLICY BECAUSE OF THE STRONG PRO-AMERICAN LEANING OF KEY DECISION PERSONNEL, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE RNLAf, AND GENERALLY SATISFACTORY STATE OF PUBLIC OPINION. EMBASSY STILL CONSIDERS IT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE US TO MINIMIZE PUBLICITY IN THE NETHERLANDS UNTIL AFTER THE US HAS MADE ITS SELECTION.

4. IN VIEW OF THIS POLICY, TOGETHER WITH MAAG PERSONNEL I CALLED THIS DATE ON GENERAL H. KNOOP, CHIEF OF STAFF RNLAf, TO DISCUSS TV PROGRAM AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT. I EXPRESSED MY CONCERN THAT PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF DIFFERING CHARACTERISTICS AND CAPABILITIES OF THE TWO US CONTENDERS COULD PROVIDE OUR OPPONENTS WITH ARGUMENTS TO PROMOTE THEIR OWN CANDIDATES.

5. GENERAL KNOOP AGREED THAT TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS OF CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS WERE NOT DESIRABLE AT ALL AT THIS TIME, BUT THAT SINCE THE TV PROGRAM WAS INITIATED BY THE MEDIA AND WOULD NOT BE TECHNICAL HE FELT THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION WOULD BE TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAM. WE CONCUR IN THIS VIEW. ACCORDINGLY, NETHERLANDS MAAG PERSONNEL HAVE AGREED TO COORDINATE MATERIALS AND ADVISE RNLAf RESPECTING PROGRAM. US INDUSTRY HAS PROVIDED 16MM FILMS AS WELL AS STILL PHOTOS TO RNLAf PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER WHO IS MONITORING AND ASSISTING TV STATION NOS IN PROGRAM PREPARATION.

6. IN VIEW OF THE IMPENDING INTERVIEW WITH SECRETARY CLEMENTS, WE WOULD LIKE TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE TWO FOLLOWING HIGHLY SENSITIVE AREAS RELATING TO THE LWF SELECTION RESPECTING WHICH HE MAY BE ASKED QUESTIONS.

7. THE FIRST ISSUE HAS TO DO WITH THE CURRENT CIVAIR DISPUTE INITIATED BY THE US WHEREIN WE ARE SEEKING A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION (60 PERCENT) IN KLM NORTH ATLANTIC TRAFFIC. THE DUTCH WENT TO COURT TO BLOCK UNILATERAL CAB ACTION AFTER NEGOTIATIONS FAILED. THE

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ISSUE IS A HOT ONE IN THE NETHERLANDS WHERE AN ATTACK ON KLM IS LIKE AN ATTACK ON THE DUTCH FLAG. VARIOUS STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE MEDIA AND SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS LINKING THIS CIVAIR ISSUE WITH THE LWF SELECTION. WE RECOMMEND THAT ANY QUESTIONS ON THIS SUBJECT BE SIDE-STEPPED ENTIRELY ON GROUNDS THAT MATTER IS BOTH BEFORE THE COURTS AND UNDER ACTIVE NEGOTIATION. WHILE IT MIGHT PRESENTLY SEEM

IN OUR INTEREST TO DENY LINKAGE WE MAY FIND OURSELVES
AT A LATER DATE ARGUING LINKAGE SHOULD, FOR EXAMPLE,
A SETTLEMENT FAVORABLE TO KLM TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE
DUTCH MAKE THEIR LWF SELECTION.

8. THE SECOND ISSUE HAS TO DO WITH THE NUCLEAR
CAPABILITY OF THE US CONTENDERS. SINCE THE ATTITUDE
OF THE DUTCH PUBLIC AND THE GOVERNMENT TOWARD NUCLEAR MATTERS
IS AMBIVALENT (THE HAGUE 5881), WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND
THAT ANY AND ALL DISCUSSION OF THE NUCLEAR CAPA-
BILITY OF THE AMERICAN CONTENDERS SHOULD BE AVOIDED
AS WELL AS ANY DISCUSSION OF NUCLEAR ROLES FOR THE
RNLAFC OR RNA. WHEN ASKED QUESTIONS AS TO NUCLEAR
CAPABILITY OF THE AMERICAN CRAFT WE HAVE TURNED THE ISSUE
ASIDE BY REPLYING THAT ANY AIRCRAFT CAN BE MADE
NUCLEAR CAPABLE.
GOULD

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